United Nations

Daily Highlights

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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ No agreement reached at talks on political settlement of conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina; Secretary-General's Special Representative Cyrus Vance expresses hope for acceptance by all parties of constitutional structure for Bosnia and Herzegovina in coming week.

+ Continuing visit to Germany, Secretary-General meets today with number of political leaders in Bonn; increased participation of Germany in the United Nations among main topics; to leave tomorrow for Paris.

+ UNTAC makes first arrest of Government party official for alleged involvement in attack on member of opposition party; prosecution by United Nations magistrate expected, says UNTAC Spokesman.

+ WFP to provide emergency food aid to Mauritania, Haiti.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali was informed by his Special Representative, Cyrus Vance, that an agreement on a political settlement of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina could not be reached today in Geneva, a Spokesperson for the Secretary-General said.

Nevertheless, the Spokesperson added, Mr. Vance expressed hope that within the coming week it will be possible for all parties to accept the constitutional structure for Bosnia and Herzegovina which was negotiated with the Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on the former Yugoslavia, and that peace and security will prevail.

The peace talks between representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia ans Montenegro), as well as the Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on former Yogoslavia - Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen - had initially started on 2 January in Geneva, and, after a few days' interruption, had resumed Sunday in Geneva.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, continuing his visit to Germany, today met with Hans-Ulrich Klose, Chairman of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and Wolfgang Schaeuble, Chairman of the Christian Democratic Party (CDU), to discuss Germany's participation in the United Nations peace-keeping and peace enforcement operations, Secretary-General's Spokesman informed correspondents today.

Mr. Boutros-Ghali also met with the Foreign Policy Committee/Sub-Committee on the United Nations of the Bundestag. He discussed his report entitled "An Agenda for Peace", the situations in Somalia and former Yugoslavia, and the question of German support for the United Nations. Representatives of each of the three parties -- CDU, SPD and the Liberal -- spoke at the meeting.

The Secretary-General attended a luncheon given by Prof. Rita Suessmuth, President of Bundestag, and later met with Hans-Dietrich Genscher, the former Foreign Minister of Germany.

He will be leaving Bonn for Paris tomorrow morning to take part in the signature ceremony of the Chemical Weapons Treaty, the Spokesman said.

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The United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) made the first arrest of a member of the Phnom Penh Government party for his "alleged involvement" in an attack on a member of the opposition party. This action was taken under a new directive establishing procedures for the prosecution of persons responsible for human rights violations in Cambodia. The person arrested would face prosecution by a United Nations magistrate, the Secretary-General's Spokesman told correspondents at Headquarters today.

The directive, signed last week by the Secretary-General's Special Representative to Cambodia, Yasushi Akashi, empowers UNTAC to indict individuals and prosecute cases using the legal system of the appropriate existing administrative structure.

In a related development, the Spokesman for UNTAC described as "very positive" Mr. Akashi's visit to Beijing, during which it was decided that the Supreme National Council (SNC) would meet in Beijing on Thursday, 28 January, to discuss the question of voting and registration of voters in the ensuing polls. Following Prince Sihanouk's decision to cooperate with UNTAC without restrictions, all 12 members of the SNC were expected to attend the meeting, the Spokesman added.

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The World Food Programme (WFP), the food aid organization of the United Nations, today announced it would provide 20,000 metric tonnes of emergency relief food rations to Mauritania to offset the serious drought hitting much of that country and also 4,000 metric tonnes of food assistance to 67,000 Haitian returnees, displaced persons and other vulnerable groups.

(more)

According to WFP estimates, the relief assistance of $4.1 million worth of wheat and sorghum to Mauritania will be enough to cover the basic needs of 420,000 people for four months. The WFP will also pay the transportation costs worth a further $3.9 million.

This emergency operation is WFP's second one for Mauritania since July, when the Programme approved 8,400 tonnes of wheat for drought victims.

The WFP further said that assistance to Haiti is vital because the country is battling a series of natural and man-made crises: two consecutive years of drought, political problems and financial trouble. Furthermore, the Organization of American States (OAS) economic embargo endorsed by the United Nations -- which began in November 1991 -- has worsened the food supply situation in that country.

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